

green eyes (you're the one i wanted to find)

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by [sunnyaftersunset](#)

Summary

Somehow, without Dream realizing, George had managed to squeeze his way into Dream's heart over the years and carve out his own space, forever to be his, and forever to remain.

And right now, with Sapnap in his ear and no stream in front of him, the haze that was settled over Dream's vision for so, so long finally clears. And all he sees is George.

George, who has never once failed to make Dream feel like he's more than enough. George, who stayed on call with Dream deep into twilight on the days that were worse than others. With soft assurances of *I'm here, Dream, I will always be here*, never made him feel judged. George, who slowly taught Dream how to swim, not to drown in his mind. Who guided him to fall back in love with the world, despite being on the other side of it.

And Dream *aches* for him.

Notes

happy birthday maia :)

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

He's speedrunning, with Sapnap's voice in his ear and no stream in front of him when he thinks about it for the very first time.

Sapnap's rambling about someone with pretty eyes and a bright smile that he saw during his latest venture outside of his house that occurs every once in a while. Dream knows Sapnap doesn't talk like this to just anyone — always been more reserved, careful with his feelings and who he chooses to share them with — but he can't bring himself to pay attention.

Instead, Dream's thinking of George, and the soft and sleepy tone his voice held when they spoke a few hours ago. Just the two of them, giggling about stupid twitter memes and whispering like they had secrets to keep from the world before Dream eventually convinced George to go to sleep.

He couldn't stop smiling for at least ten minutes after George left the call.

It's becoming kind of a frequent thing for him, thinking about George. The sound of his voice, and the way his laugh comes out in spurts of little hiccups and how his face always flushes a deep pink, almost without his permission, when he finds something genuinely funny. His eyes, brown and entrancing, and how if he's lucky enough to be watching George's stream, he'll get to watch as they light up when Dream joins the call.

Dream has had friends he loves talking to before, *best* friends, but not like this. He has no idea what it means.

Sapnap notices, because of course he does. "Where's your head at, Dream?"

"Hm?"

"I can tell when you're out of it, dummy. What's up?"

Dream doesn't want to talk about it, not in the slightest, but he knows Sapnap isn't going to let him bottle his feelings up. He knows him well enough after all these years to know that Dream's go-to feeling management is *go away*. He knows Dream would let it destroy him over time rather than talk about it, if you let him.

Sapnap doesn't let him.

"Talk to me, Dream."

He's silent for a moment while he thinks of what to say. "Do you—" he stops. "Do you think it's dumb to want to talk to someone... like all the time?"

"Huh. Well, okay," he hears Sapnap shift in his seat, "Do you want to talk to someone just because you want to talk to somebody, or because it's one person specifically?"

Dream's always known that he can go to Sapnap with anything, or Bad, or Wilbur, even. Quackity and Karl are almost always online, and Tommy too. A lack of people to talk to has never been an issue of Dream's, thanks to the blessing of having friends, *good* friends scattered in nearly every corner of the world.

"It's one person. Because it's-it's them specifically." He finds himself rambling before he can stop it, the comfort of knowing his best friend is there to listen and to help, not to judge, filling his veins with the courage to do so. "And I don't know what that means. I think of them all the time, *all the*

time , and I always want to talk to them, no matter what, which is fine except for the part where I do not *get what that means*, and-

“George.”

His throat runs dry. “What?”

“It’s George, isn’t it?”

He’s silent for several seconds before he nods, slowly, and then realizes Sapnap can’t see him. “Yes,” he says in a small voice.

“Then yes, it is dumb. What kind of psycho would ever want to talk to *Gogy* all the time?” He pronounces Gogy as *Gow-ge* , like the idiot he is, before rushedly continuing, “But it’s not dumb to feel like that, of course not. Not at all.”

“Feel like what?”

He thinks he hears Sapnap’s sigh all the way from Texas. “Do you like him, Dream?”

And that is something Dream has never asked himself before. The smile that always finds its way to Dream’s face when he’s talking to George, or the constant want for George to be there — wherever he is, whoever he’s talking to — he’s always attributed to the easy way they understand each other.

But sometimes, when it’s just Dream and George, and George is talking about the randomest of topics, like what pair of sneakers he plans on buying next and how *"English sizes are different, Dream, my feet are NOT small."* There’s something there. An undercurrent flowing between them, like the ocean that separates them, that says more than *I know you* .

“I don’t know,” Dream answers truthfully.

“Okay, Dream, I want you to listen to what I’m about to say. Okay?”

“Yeah. Okay.”

“Think about this, and think about it hard. You and George... you guys have always had something kind of special. You’re my best friends in the entire world, and George is too. And I would say I’m your best friend and George’s too, yes? Yes,” Sapnap affirms, not waiting for a response as he hits his stride.

“But you and George are different. You’re drawn to each other like magnets, I swear. I’ve seen it since the very beginning when you met him on Bad’s server. He pulls you out of your head when you get all stuck in there. You’re always the one who picks up on it when he gets upset by some dumb little thing and tries to hide it. You and I are best friends, Dream. We always will be. Just like me and George. But you and him... you just *fit* .”

And... well.

Sapnap’s right, isn’t he?

When Dream met George, everything was so blessedly uncomplicated, and they had fallen into each other without a second thought. Inseparable almost instantly. Two halves of a whole. They could go on for hours and never run out of things to talk about, never run out of things to laugh at, could never get enough of each other.

Before, Dream's heart had grown heavy from years of never really feeling like he belonged somewhere. Years of never really feeling like enough. His mind had become poison and he used to allow himself to drink it daily.

Then, all of the sudden, a British boy with a sassy attitude and an infectious smile that crinkled his pretty brown eyes and a laugh that could light up a room came stumbling in Dream's life, and everything fell into place.

Somehow, without Dream realizing, George had managed to squeeze his way into Dream's heart over the years and carve out his own space, forever to be his, and forever to remain.

And right now, with Sapnap in his ear and no stream in front of him, the haze that was settled over Dream's vision for so, so long finally clears. And all he sees is George.

George, who has never once failed to make Dream feel like he's more than enough. George, who stayed on call with Dream deep into twilight on the days that were worse than others. With soft assurances of *I'm here, Dream, I will always be here*, never made him feel judged. George, who slowly taught Dream how to swim, not to drown in his mind. Who guided him to fall back in love with the world, despite being on the other side of it.

And Dream *aches* for him.

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It's three days later when George calls him.

He's been moping, just a little bit, and hasn't been on Teamspeak, or Discord, or replying to anything.

It wasn't necessarily on purpose, Dream doesn't think. After his talk with Sapnap, he'd just come to the conclusion that the only thing worse than *not* continuing to ruin his already horrid sleep schedule by staying up every night to listen to George's soft-spoken words, the only thing worse than to *not* continue every day as it always was before, with the two of them inseparable and talking any and all hours of the day, was for him *to do so*.

So, instead, Dream did what any sane person would do. Mope, ignore absolutely everyone, *especially* George (even if it was much harder than he'll admit), listen to copious amounts of Coldplay and try like hell to pretend everything is fine.

Everything was of course, not fine, and it took George exactly one day to realize this, judging by the influx of messages around 2 A.M the second morning of his radio silence. No calls then, however. Dream was very much grateful for this, as he's sure he would've sounded like an utter disaster.

Sapnap knew to let him be for a little, but Dream fully expected him to be the one to call first and force him to talk about it instead of just isolating himself completely, as he had been oh-so-maturely doing.

Instead, it was George.

He's making ramen and having a grueling conversation with Patches about the disastrous state of the American economy when his phone rings the specific ringtone he set for George.

Somehow, his inept mind does not register this.

He taps the green answer button and raises the phone to his ear. "Sap?"

"Try again."

Dream chokes on air.

"George?"

"Hi," he says, and his tone is gentler than before, just slightly. "Where have you been?"

"I-um," he replies, eloquently. "Phone's been off."

It's a dumb excuse, and Dream knows the second it leaves his mouth George won't buy it for a second.

Internally, he curses the way George is able to read him better than anyone, has always been able to, as if Dream is a personal novel written just for his eyes, pages spread at his liking.

"No, it hasn't," George states simply. A few beats pass, and then he asks, "What's wrong, Dream?"

He's never hated how bad he is at hiding things from him as much as he does right now, because for the first time Dream *can't tell him what's wrong*.

"It's nothing, George. Don't worry about it."

"No, I am worrying about it," he says, stubbornly. "You've never done this before. You've never just... *disappeared*, and you've never not told me anything. *I've* never not told *you* anything."

This is the one thing I can't tell you. The only piece of me you can never know, because I know you'll run from me the second you do.

Dream's voice is on the verge of begging when he speaks again, "George. Please. It's nothing."

He can't see him, but he knows George's eyebrows have furrowed with confusion, that his eyes have that slight sad tilt to them, and he hates himself for it.

The silence is back, for longer this time, and it sits heavily between them.

George is the one who breaks it. "Okay. Well, I-uh. I missed you. When you were away." His tone is soft. Dream wants to cry.

He squeezes his eyes shut at his words, as if that will help anything, and wishes things were simpler. Part of him wishes he could just *see* George, have him there with him.

But Dream can't have George. Not how he wants to. So, instead, he shoves his feelings down his throat, feigns their inexistence, and returns to his best friend. His foolish heart isn't important enough to lose him.

"I missed you too, George. I'm sorry for disappearing." *Silence: one, two, three, four.* "Do you wanna... um. Play bedwars, or something?" His throat is tight. He prays George doesn't notice.

He sighs, and Dream can't tell whether it's out of relief or exasperation. "Yeah," is what he says. "Of course, Dream."

Dream falls into the void within the first minutes of the game, and George laughs at him. They still

end up dominating everyone, anyways, and it feels normal. It feels like just the two of them, lighthearted, easy, and simple as it always was.

A disagreeing ache rests persistent in Dream's chest.

-

Enthusiastic, beyond belief

Crywank seeps through his phone's speakers as Dream sits atop his roof. The sun is setting, as it always does, and he admires its consistency.

Mellow orange fades into a fiery rose. Dream misses George.

Which is rather dumb, if one thinks about it. Dream has never *seen* George, never sat by his side and admired the warm brown of his eyes. Even still, he thinks that's where he was created to be. How could it be anywhere else?

In a busy room, you are all I see.

It's been just over a week since he spoke with Sapnap, since the haze cleared and his feelings boiled to the surface to come and smack him in the face.

That night, after leaving the call, was horribly arduous for Dream. It was anguish and sharp twinges in his heart and anger, at himself, for not knowing. How couldn't he have? It's been right in front of his face since the very beginning.

George has always been such an enigma. Even if at times it was frustrating, Dream respected his nature, and eventually grew to admire it. The bravery to be reclusive, to share only scraps of your inner thoughts and feelings with even your closest friends is such a contrast to Dream's wide-open self.

Where Dream found a sense of relief in transparency (despite his inability to effectively manage his feelings), George was at peace with being dismissed as a shadow, someone seen as little more than a pretty sounding voice and a lukewarm personality.

Thinking back on it now, George seemed cold from the start. Dream remembers struggling to read him properly for months. It was evident to him that George held a deep-rooted aversion to anything under the surface, and preferred to hold friends at an arm's distance. Whether it was out of genuine distaste, a fear of vulnerability or somewhere in between — Dream had no idea.

For a while, it seemed as though it would stay that way, with Dream perpetually trapped in a limbo where he desperately wanted to know George better, understand him and his intricacies, but would ultimately go nowhere. Dream had tried nearly everything under the sun to appease him — from staying up at absurd hours doing stupid dares to make him smile, to ordering him food during long, complaint-filled hours where George was stuck slouched in his chair editing videos.

Gradually, and with time and great persistence, George let Dream in *more*, but never fully.

Dream's patience never faltered. After all, it was through the depth of George's consideration and perceptive nature, not his emotional directiveness, that led Dream to where he is now.

He supposes feelings are like that, however. The ones that matter, the ones that come to stay. The ones that start on the surface and all in good time grow deeper, more raw, and painstakingly thorough. You're walking blindly into a wide open field with no possible idea of what is to come,

and slowly, you become *known* .

Your intricacies and greatest joys and worst despairs are laid bare, but you find that you don't mind all that much, as you have never found such comfort, such peace, never found yourself so utterly happy. You seek them, and everything that is them, desperately. And despite this, you may still not even know what's about to happen. What fate has had written in the stars far longer than you've spent breathing the sweetness of day.

And then, all too soon (*or maybe just in time*) your arms are spread wide and you're falling, still entirely blind and just praying to whatever gods may be listening from among the stars that you'll be caught.

To understand falling in love, or rather to understand the depths to which you have fallen, can be quite elusive, Dream thinks. Or, at least, it was for him.

Dream doesn't know if everything happens for a reason. He doesn't know if everything is intertwined, if every possible action in some random, meaningless situation leads to infinite drastically different futures. He doesn't know if there's a plan, if there's someone eternal and omniscient watching over him.

Dream does know, however, that his fate was inevitable, sealed the very second he heard George laugh for the first time.

And, now, he is at peace with that.

Once he pulled himself out of his (admittedly minor) self-isolating slump and proceeded with his normal swing of things as if he *hadn't* been hit with the realization of his feelings with the force of a speeding truck, it was easier to understand them. To observe them in action, painfully aware of what the swirling storm in his chest actually means when George lets out that one specific giggle of his that is just so *pretty* . It brings a new pain to Dream that he's not yet familiar with. More of a reminder than an ache —*this is what you feel, and this is what you can't have*.

To finally distinguish the sheer contentment and peace of mind Dream has when surrounded by his friends, the people he values the most, all talking over each other in overcrowded, chaotic discord calls, from the unmatched giddiness and gentle comfort he and George find in one another.

The light of the day has cast its final glow, and the sky now holds a deep indigo.

As he breathes deeply in the air of fresh nighttime, cool and invigorating, he knows that this is here to stay. Dream is in love with George, the kind of love that came without warning, all-consuming yet as easy as breathing. This much, he knows.

Love and Life have not been kind to him in the past. But they gave him George, who filled the pieces of Dream that had been empty for so long, cracked open and hollow from so much *take* .

This, Dream supposes, is his tragedy. He loves a boy who will never love him back, he yearns for him from an ocean away, the glistening moon of tonight the only thing they share.

But despite everything, Dream is at peace. He welcomed being in love with George with open arms, never could find it in himself to deny him anything, even his heart on a platter.

Eventually, the sun will rise across the ocean and Dream will remain under the moon. But, at the end of everything, he will still have George.

He may want more. He may want George atop his roof, tucked into his side to see a Floridian

sunset in full view that Dream knows he can't even fully appreciate, may want George's soft tone of the early dawn to gently whisper reciprocated confessions to match his.

But, as they say, nobody can have everything they want. *Where would you keep it all?*

Dream knows he will have George as his best friend until the end of time, always, through thick and thin. And who is he, really, to question fate?

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It's two in the morning and Dream is on the SMP chasing Sapnap down like a madman.

Quackity is screaming about something that Dream only finds mildly concerning in his haste to kill Sapnap, who made the mistake of stealing his best crossbow. Idiot.

Karl and George just laugh and laugh, a sound that somewhat resembles windshield wipers in its intertwinement.

Dream finally corners Sapnap — "*How do you always know?!*" — in the community house, and kills him easily. His crossbow is thankfully returned, retrieved off of the crafting table floor, and he gains two whole levels of experience from Sapnap's lost ones.

"Sapnap, you didn't stand a *chance*," Karl wheezes. "Not a chance!"

"Fuck you, I was trying to get to an ender chest!"

"Isn't there one in the fucking *center* of the community house?" Quackity cackles. "How did you—how did you miss it?"

"Fuck!"

They're all sent into another fit of hysterics, the freeness of not being on stream filling them all with easy carefreeness. Dream is unsuccessful in trying to ignore the adorableness of which George's laugh spills out of him.

"Sapnap, you're actually an idiot," George says, and the 'actually' comes out like 'ach-lee'. It's painfully endearing.

"Gogy," Sapnap whines. "Be nice to me."

"George is just mean. He never returns my *good-morning* texts, Sapnap. Get used to it."

"I think that's just you, Quackity. George and I facetime all the time." Karl brags.

Sapnap argues immediately. "Really? " he asks, faux-curiously. "Not as much as him and Dream. I'll actually make a bet on that."

"Okay, deal, deal. How mu-"

"Why is it always me you argue about?" George interrupts, a brat.

"Because you're the meanest, George." Dream tells him. Then, because he never really will be able to help himself, "And Karl, you're not gonna win that bet."

George adds, "Yeah. Probably not. Sorry, Karl."

If Dream's cheeks flush, there's no webcam to prove it.

"George! How could you?" Karl complains. "I thought we had something special."

"Karl, I think you're forgetting about me and Sapnap. We're gonna get married without you."

"True!" Sapnap adds. "Whatever you and George have is nothing compared to what him and Dream have, come on now."

His jaw clenches involuntarily. He doesn't know whether it's out of embarrassment or nervousness. Very possibly both. What is Sapnap *doing*?

Dream knows it's all a bit, the exact same one they do day after day to the point it's a wonder they still find it funny, but Sapnap knows it's more than that. Dream does too, now. It's not as much of a *joke*, anymore. Maybe it never was.

His character has made its way down the endless oak plank path in the SMP, crossing the distance from the community house over to where Tommy's house stands nestled into the mountain. He thanks the universe that that chaotic child is not present at this moment.

All five of them are on that central oak plank path, mindlessly running up and down and hitting each other as they speak. He has yet to give Sapnap his netherite things back yet after rightfully retrieving his crossbow from him, and he snickers slightly at his armour-less character jumping amongst them all.

"I bet George answers Dream's *good-morning* texts," Quackity says woefully.

George hits him off the path in response.

"He definitely does," Karl adds. "And he probably sends him heart emojis back."

He really wants the topic to change. His cheeks are *burning*, which they've never done before in conversations like this, the same conversations he has all the time. This is so painfully normal, but it's so, so different now. Now, he's strikingly more affected. He just needs it to stop, just for a moment —

And then, Karl's shrieking "Wait, Quackity, where are *my* good-morning texts?" And Dream's wheeze flows out of him like a deflating balloon. *And like an exhale of relief, maybe.*

"*Quackity*," Dream exclaims. "You went all the way to North Carolina to see Karl and you can't even send him good-morning texts?"

"Exactly! What's wrong with you?" Karl whines. "You're my least favorite fiancé."

George giggles. "Quackity, come on. That's messed up."

They all know he has no argument, and within seconds they're all in hysterics, *yet again*, and they just let Quackity cackle like a hyena instead of defending himself.

Once they've all calmed down to the point of coherent speaking, Quackity wonders aloud, "Didn't the UK travel ban get lifted a few days ago? Who's George gonna come see first?"

"Me," Dream answers immediately. He doesn't even think about it, it's a muscle memory response.

Over the overlapping roars of laughter, Dream thinks he catches a "*Yeah, actually*" — and he seems to be the only one who does. The words are faint enough to where he thinks it's quite

possible he imagined them, but he knows with certainty it was George's voice, dreamt-up or not.

He somewhat registers Quackity's, "You're all wrong, he's coming to see me first!" — but it's slightly hazy, because all that's running through his mind is, *didn't anyone else hear that?*

And the answer seems to be no, as nobody has said a word pertaining to George's soft — but *there* — response .

A few more moments pass, the relaxed air of dwindling laughter resting over them all. He realizes with a start that his character went still in-game when Karl brought up the travel ban lift, and he jumps back into movement, his glowing sword hitting Sapnap without much intention of doing so.

As Sapnap's character turns red and falls to the ground for the second time that night, Dream grin is genuine and he allows himself to get lost in the steadfast joy of his friends. He laughs along, convinces himself the words he heard were created by his imagination, and they fade from his mind with his next wheeze.

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The early hours of the morning startle as they hold Dream's wake instead of the hours leading up to his slumber, as they so often do. They reward him for his early rise with unforgiving rays, persistent and bright, shining through his bedroom window that he didn't bother to close the curtain of the previous night.

He gets up with a surprising peace of mind, and heads to feed Patches and fix himself breakfast. She curls around his ankles when he reaches the kitchen, and he leans down to stroke her soft fur, earning him a content purr in response.

When Dream checks his pantry and finds himself entirely unbothered by his devastating scarcity of pancake mix, he thinks he's had something of a spiritual awakening.

Perhaps a realization of feelings was exactly what he needed, he thinks. Maybe this has caused him to attain peak self-awareness, and he's reached nirvana. He doesn't think he'll ever feel anything akin to sadness ever again.

He can *feel* Sapnap's concern at his newfound peace radiating through his walls, but doesn't quite care or plan to alert him as he pours copious amounts of syrup on his microwaved Eggo. He doesn't think life could possibly get better.

Dream's phone rings, and it's really all a downward spiral from there.

He lazily grabs it from its face-down spot on his counter, and doesn't recognize the number. Which is alarming, and could very possibly put him in mortal peril, but he answers anyway. "Uh... hello?" he asks cautiously.

"Dream? Is that you?" a familiar voice exclaims, sounding utterly relieved. "Oh, thank god. I thought for sure I got the number wrong."

"George?" Dream asks incredulously. "What — is everything okay? Why aren't you calling me on your phone?"

George ignores him entirely. "Do you have a car?" he inquires, impatient.

"I — yes? What the hell are you talking about?"

“Can you come pick me up at the airport? I’m at Orlando International.”

Dream brain malfunctions momentarily. Reboots, restarts, takes a few seconds to reload. He feels like that rainbow loading circle for multiple moments. There’s no way he just heard George correctly. “Did you just —*Orlando* ?” he stammers dumbly.

George sighs, far too irritated for someone showing up unannounced in another goddamn *country* . “My plane just landed. My phone died, and I’m talking on a payphone. Can you come pick me up, please?”

Dream sets his phone down, closes his eyes, and rubs his temples for several moments. He is very unsure whether or not this is a fever dream, and he isn’t fully processing what is going on, but if this is real and happening, he is utterly *fucked* .

He raises it back to his ear. “I’m on my way,” Dream says.

“See you soon!” George replies cheerily. *What the fuck is happening?*

Approximately six minutes later, Dream is reversing out of his driveway in his silver Subaru Outback, a can of Fanta nestled in his cup holder, and speeding towards Orlando International. He turns the radio up and is met with The Beatles’ *All You Need is Love* , and promptly switches to a heavy rock song from Underground Garage. He turns it up and tells himself it’s just to make him more alert to drive.

It hits him around halfway to the airport just what exactly is transpiring. He’s about to pick up George, who showed up *completely unannounced* to a country he’s never stepped foot in before, see him in person for the very first time, and let his best friend stay in his house for, well. However long he pleases, Dream supposes.

He determinedly does *not* think about how just mere days ago he had a massive epiphany pertaining to his true feelings for said best friend. He does not focus on the persistent beat against his chest that sings his name, but instead on the curve of the road leading Dream right to him.

This is fine , he tells himself . *This is all fine. This will all be fine.*

He pulls into the terminals, and comes somewhat close to passing out when he sees the *British Airways* sign in all its blue, bold letters glory. He turns down the radio and begins taking slow, deep breaths as he scours the sidewalks for George.

His eyes skim over infinite forgettable faces at a remarkable speed, each dismissed after a prompt *Not George* signal from his brain.

Then, his eyes are locked with the ones he’s been looking at through a screen for years and years, and Dream’s first coherent thought of the hundreds running through his brain faster than the speed of light is, *he is so fucking pretty*.

George is there, and he’s right by the automatic-door exits, heading towards his car. His fancy roller suitcase, naturally of a deep royal blue, rolls behind him. He’s wearing one of Dream’s black merch hoodies — which, for fucks sake, he didn’t even know George *bought* one — and it falls oversized. His blue jeans are rolled up at the ends, most likely so they wouldn’t drag on the floor. He’s probably slightly shorter than he made himself out to be, but it’s not by much. His hair is longer than Dream last saw it on call, *fluffier* , and a few dark brown strands curl just slightly at his hairline.

Dream is so fucked. So, so, fucked.

When his gaze meets Dream's through the glass of his windshield, George's eyes immediately crinkle at the corners and a smile is overtaking his face, big and bright.

Hi, his eyes say, I know you.

You do , Dream's reply wordlessly, you always have.

George hasn't *not* seen Dream, despite what they tell the fans. He gets the Dream from his horrible iPhone 6 front camera that he refuses to replace, facetime calls at sporadic times always answered with giddiness.

He gets glimpses of Dream on the scarce occasions he turns his camera on in discord calls, laughter spilling out of him and filling his ears, melodically unforgiving in its rarity.

George is looking right at him now, perfect as ever, and he's mere moments from reaching the car door, from reaching Dream. There is nothing for him to hide behind. The ocean between them has finally dried, but Dream thinks he feels it filling once again with the watery breaths he takes.

He takes a swig from his Fanta, lets the carbonation he hates turn his mind to dizzy.

There's a knock at his window. Pale knuckles press shyly against its coolness, and all too captivating eyes are looking at him, a question swirling in their wide excitement. *Let me in?*

And how could anybody deny you?

George most definitely is aware he can just *open the door himself*, considering the doors clicked unlocked right as he approached. Nevertheless, Dream leans across the console and opens the passenger door for him, and is consequently met with any greeting he was attempting to coherently form dying in his mouth as moves back to his seat, one hand on the wheel and the other on the console, eyes fixed on the sight in front of him.

George places his suitcase in the backseat, slides into the seat and shuts the door behind him all in fluid movement. He's put-together, alert, and he turns to look at Dream.

"Hi," he says, and his voice is so *warm* .

"George," Dream says, and the dazedness dissolves. George is here, he's *here*, and his gentle amber and vanilla scents washes over Dream like the soft waves of a near-tideless ocean. He is grounded.

"Sorry I didn't come with any warning."

Dream almost laughs, the idea that there's a world in which he wouldn't have dropped everything for George the second he called for him is one he can't entertain. "You're *here* ," he says instead. "I think that outweighs everything else."

The smile returns, hypnotizing in the midday sun shining through the window. "I suppose it does."

Maybe comfortable silence isn't *so* overrated, Dream thinks, as he languidly pulls out from the curb and towards the exit. George is messing with the radio, a soft Joy Again song seeping through the old speakers, and he finds himself utterly at ease.

"Is there any food around here?" George asks a stretch of minutes later, dramatically, when the airport is long out of sight and everything in front of them is exit signs and steady road.

"I don't think you're in any position to be demanding, George," he replies, grin pulling on the

corners of his mouth.

"Why not?"

"Country sniper."

"Country sniper?" George squawks. "You're unbelievable. I just want some fries."

Dream laughs at his pout, but he moves into the lane he knows is about to turn into a Wendy's anyways.

About thirty seconds later, George catches sight of the bright red sign. He squeals with delight, and Dream shoves his face into his sleeve to hide his smitten smile, attempting and failing to be subtle.

He pulls into the drive thru and he lets George order mounds of food he's positive he won't finish. He knows he's gonna have to pay for it all, but it's worth it after George's giddy *"thank you, Dream!"*

With those brown eyes buzzing with anticipation (for *Wendy's fries* of all things), and whole face lit up, Dream thinks he'd give him anything he asked for.

The poor man hands them bag after bag of food at the checkout window, and Dream gives George a look of mock annoyance, but hands the man his card nonetheless.

They're back on the road a minute later, coffeehouse blend on the radio and happy munching sounds from the passenger's seat. At some point, George snatches his Fanta from the cup holder and he blames Dream for not reminding him to order a drink.

Dream just shakes his head and turns back to the road ahead of him with a fond smile.

Eventually, they reach his house. Greenery is sprawled along the outside walls and sprouts through cracks in the pavement, and the atmosphere alludes both to a raging Flordian as well as a lovely cat lady who watches ocean documentaries. Which one shows more to the unbiased eye, Dream has long since decided is up for anyone's guess.

Once he's parked in the driveway, he looks over to see George completely passed out, head leaning against the window and hand still shoved in the half-full Wendy's bag.

"George?" he tries.

Nothing.

Hesitantly, he leans over and gently shakes his shoulder. "George?" he tries again.

His face contorts into a slight pout, and he readjusts his head to nestle back into the curve where the window meets the car door.

Well it'd be rude not to get his luggage, right? he thinks, as he simultaneously attempts to convince himself George will have miraculously awoken by the time he comes back.

Even still, Dream gets out of the car and opens the door to the backseat as if noise will inflict genuine horrors upon him.

He carries George's fancy blue suitcase all the way to the guest room, plopping it down at the foot of the bed. He thanks the universe he habitually keeps his house clean and doesn't have to stress about the state of the almost entirely unused guest room. He still sweeps a hand over the bedspread

a few times, though, just in case.

A moment later he's back by the car, and, shockingly, George remains asleep.

Dream sighs and rubs his temples for the second time that day. He knows he doesn't have the heart to wake him up, not with his pretty eyelashes resting against his cheekbones and his lips curved into the slightest little smile. He cannot catch a *break*, it's like the universe is just playing with him at this point.

But, as they say, no rest for the wicked.

Slowly, he pulls open the door of the passenger seat, and slips his arms under the line of George's shoulders and the bend in his knees. He tries, desperately, not to glance down at his sleeping face. He doesn't even make it to the front door before he fails.

The first thing he notices up close is the faint freckles that dot the bridge of George's nose and spread scarcely across the height of his cheekbones. His skin is pale, but it looks so *soft*, and Dream thinks he's the most beautiful thing he's ever seen.

He almost runs into the door in his entrancement, but he manages to get him and George to the guest bedroom in one piece. He gently lays George down on the bed, grabs a blanket to keep him warm, and closes the curtains to block out any forcefully-awakening brightness.

Figuring jet lag has taken its toll, Dream cleans up his plate from earlier that he abandoned, grabs a fresh bottle of water and heads to his office. Patches is, as expected, pawing at one of his Walmart shoes that he always leaves at the foot of his desk and has all but accepted as another one of her toys.

"Hey, pretty girl," he coos, kneeling down and scratching behind her ears. "I think I'm a little fucked."

She looks at him curiously in response.

"Yeah, I don't know how it happened either. I thought the universe and I were *bonding*, Patches."

God, Dream misses how simple things were just this morning.

Sighing, he takes one glance up at his monitor and promptly decides to call it a night. He gently picks up Patches, who tries to argue but will undoubtedly come clawing at Dream's door later in the night anyways, and heads to his room.

Lying face up in his bed, Dream's mind runs rampant. He knows, in his head, that George has no intentions by coming here. He knows his heart shouldn't be racing with possibilities, hopes, chances.

Enveloped in the darkness of his room, the inevitable *what if?* enters his mind.

George has always been so far away. Just out of reach, but always there. Now everything is different and Dream is lying awake in a bed he's slept in countless times while George sleeps soundly just a few doors down.

He needs to let this go, he knows. At the very least so to not ruin George's trip, or whatever godforsaken reason he had for coming here so abruptly. He *knows* all of this, logically, but the thought still prys.

Some questions, he thinks, may be better off without answers.

-

Dream wakes to the sound of cabinets closing unusually loud.

Rolling over begrudgingly, he checks his phone and blinks away the sleep-inflicted blurriness. 3:54 A.M with a few notifications, the shrieking bright screen informs him.

Naturally, he has to go inspect. He trudges into the kitchen, still clad in an overworn, too-big band t-shirt and rubbing his eyes, feet near dragging on the floor from the lack of energy to form sufficient steps.

At the sound of footsteps, the culprit, perched awkwardly on the counter in order to reach a shelf, whips his head around. "Dream?"

The sight is so ridiculous that a wheeze forces its boisterous way out of Dream's sleep-riddled self. "What the hell are you doing?" he laughs.

A smile slowly spreads across George's face at his wheeze, but he fights valiantly to hide it. "Trying to eat some cereal, you dickhead!"

Tears are now starting to form at the corners of Dream's eyes. "Cereal?" he manages, "*at three in the morning?*"

"Yes! I was hungry, asshole!"

"You're calling me names as if I'm the one who woke *you* up because I was closing cabinets like a blind raccoon! At three in the morning!"

George just rolls his eyes and tells him to fuck off again. Dream doesn't fall to the floor with the force of his resulting tea-kettle noise, but it's a very near thing.

He manages to compose himself and goes to get George's stupid bowl, and shows him where he keeps the cereal. He has copious amounts of it, and many more brands than he'll ever eat, probably because his self control is nonexistent and his last grocery trip was only two days ago.

"Why the hell do you have so much cereal?" George points out, because of course he does.

Dream just shoves a box of Lucky Charms in his face in response.

He's so tired he could pass out, but he doesn't depart back to his room like any sane person would do. Instead, he fills his own bowl full of cereal, pulls out one of the seats at the island for George, and sits in the one next to him.

They wordlessly eat together and it's strangely domestic and peaceful and a little bit wonderful. At some point George retrieves them both more cereal and milk from the fridge he magically knows how to navigate, and Dream happily refills both of their bowls.

Halfway into bowl number two, George says, "I'm really happy to see you."

Dream looks at George as he chews another mouthful of Lucky Charms and swears that his heart stutters in his chest. A shy smile rests on George's features, easy with poise and unadulterated beauty. An unshakeable self-assuredness lies in the disheveledness of his hair, the curve of his spine and the crinkled hoodie from slumber. Dream's *want* is near suffocating.

He feels the itch to say something, anything really, but nothing feels right.

"I'm really happy to see you too, George," he tells him, shoveling another mouthful of Lucky Charms to prevent anything else from spilling out. After somewhat collecting his thoughts, he adds on, "You've always been welcome to come here, you know. All you had to do was ask. Or, not even that, I suppose."

"Thank you," comes George's soft reply. And then, a few beats later he adds, "I think that you might be my favorite person."

He blinks in surprise. He knew George's words grew deeper, more personal than he ever would be normally —*or with anyone else*— as the dusk fades into dawn, but he didn't plan on it translating into soft words at 3 A.M. washed over by the fridge light of his kitchen.

"Am I?" Dream challenges.

He meets his steady gaze, and there's a look on George's face he can't quite decipher.

"You are," is what he says, eyes blazing. "You always have been."

"Why is that?" Dream knows he shouldn't push, that he's not gonna hear what he aches to, but the stark rarity of hearing these words from George is not lost on him. It may be wrong, in a way, to wring George out until his words inevitably lose their depth, but he's drunk on the feeling of *George*— his words are glowing embers to Dream's fire, and he can't stop burning.

"There is a me that lives only when you're there, and it's my favorite version of me there is. I think you bring out the best in me, somehow."

George never makes it easy, does he?

"We bring out the best in each other," Dream counters, still selectively choosing his words.

"Maybe so," George wonders aloud. "Maybe we just work."

Dream thinks back to Sapnap's words. "We?"

"Me," George says, "and you."

He looks down at his now empty bowl and hopes the dimness of the kitchen fails to illuminate the raging wildfire that is the growing pink of his cheeks, and the vast difference between what his words mean to Dream —*everything, and so much more*— versus how painfully lighthearted it all must be to George. Friends appreciating friends, perhaps. It hurts to even think about.

Dream wants and wants and wants, and he's sure it'll be his downfall.

If I told you how starved I am of you, even with you standing right before me, what would you say?

"I guess we do work," he says instead, and grabs both empty cereal bowls to rinse them in the sink.

He can't bring himself to look back at George when he turns to return to his room. He knows the nighttime earnesty glistening in his eyes has a dangerous hold on him, and sooner or later all of Dream's thoughts and feelings will come spilling out.

Back in his bed, he falls asleep fast. Faintly, he dreams of pretty skies and brown eyed boys.

-

"Can we have pizza for dinner?"

George looks up at him from his spot nestled into Dream's armchair. "Only if I can have pepperoni."

They've been watching Survivor since noon, and neither have brought up anything of the night before. George has been slowly burning through his entire supply of apple juice and laughing at all of Dream's impersonations of the worst contestants and suggestive commentary.

"Course," Dream replies. "Want anything to drink?"

"*Drink* drink or regular drink?"

"I don't really drink. But whatever you want, really."

"I'm fine with just your apple juice."

Dream grins at him. "Is that all you drink?"

"Maybe," George says defensively. "Or maybe I don't trust the water in a stranger's home, what about that?"

Dream just laughs and orders him a pepperoni pizza.

It's half past six when their food arrives, and George all but sprints to the door to get it. Dream hands the deliverer a tip while George grabs all the boxes, and he tries not to think about how domestic it looks.

It takes George less than five minutes to clean his entire plate.

"Are you crazy?" Dream asks him. "You're gonna make yourself sick."

George doesn't even look at him, eyes focused on something in the distance. Dream follows his gaze and is met with the blending pinks of the sunset through the window.

"You wanna go watch?"

Dream sees a hesitancy in his eyes and he immediately wants to soothe any and all uncertainties that lie within them.

"I won't be able to really appreciate it, though."

"You were just now!" Dream tells him, and is met with a small smile still laced with uncertainty.

"Doesn't matter, George. C'mon, I'll show you a better view."

George tilts his head at him.

"Please let me show you a better view."

Dream reaches out his hand across the counter separating them, palm facing upwards in offering.

With little hesitation, George takes it, and allows Dream to guide him.

Leading him up the stairs, Dream can't help but relish in the way their fingers intertwine. George's

slender hands fit into his almost as if they were once handcrafted as perfect reciprocals. His palm is small in comparison to Dream's, but the firmness of George's grip negates any thought of vulnerability. Instead holding a sense of power, experience, and dignity. Considering it is George's, it's far from an illogical extension.

They reach Dream's bedroom window that he climbs onto the roof from, figured it out on his second day owning the house. As he moves to open it, George loses that easy smile. He squeezes Dream's hand to convey his nervousness.

"I've done it a million times. It'll be worth it, George," Dream reassures, stroking his thumb over his pale knuckles, "I promise."

"Okay," George agrees. "Only since you promised. But you're going first."

Slowly but surely, Dream coaxes George out of the window and into his favorite spot on the roof. It's a miracle the sky, sprawled above of them in perfect view, has any color left by the time they get settled.

"The view *is* better," George admits.

Eyes glued to the dimming sky, his fingers remain interlocked with Dream's.

"I told you it would be."

They sit in silence, and at some point George leans over and rests his head on Dream's shoulder. Basked in the evening warmth and each other's presence, they stay like that for a long time.

"I used to think about this all the time," Dream whispers.

"This?"

"I would watch these sunsets, almost every night, and wish you were here. In my house, in my space," Dream says. He feels the words flowing out of him, buzzing with the anticipation of being said.

He lets them.

"At the end of every day, sitting here, it was always something to look forward to. I'm a sucker for the sky and its colors would remind me of you. Always wanted to watch one with you, is all."

Several moments of silence follow, and Dream begins to feel a terrible gnawing feeling in his stomach of a terrible mistake. Anxious thoughts of fear and regret cycle through his mind too fast for any to be intelligible, before George finally breaks the anguishing silence.

"I think you have the most beautiful mind."

Dream is certain George will be the death of him. His words are to Dream what bourbon is to a starved drunk, intoxicating and addicting, and Dream wonders if he'll be able live another day of his life without hearing his tender tone pronounced by the crepuscular light.

Unsurprisingly in lieu of a response, Dream just tightens his hold on George's hand. He hopes that it even somewhat conveys what he cannot with his words.

George lifts his head from Dream's shoulder, and Dream feels his gaze burn into him. Fully aware of the danger of those brown eyes, he has every intention of remaining focused on the near-dark

sky in front of him.

There's a delicate touch on his face, and George's fingers turn him to meet his eyes.

"Your words are so lovely," George whispers, now face-to-face. "Why on earth don't you share them enough?"

"They're all for you," Dream murmurs, "not for anyone else."

Their eyes are locked and the intensity of their position is overwhelming. George's touch still rests on Dream's cheek, and he unconsciously moves his own hand to keep it there.

Brown eyes flick down, and then back up.

Whether Dream is thinking past the point of coherency or he's not thinking at all, he doesn't know. All he sees are those *eyes*, they're closer now, and his heart hammers from both the intensified air between them and the rawness of both of their words.

It's like they're frozen in time, cast forever in time by the memory of Dream's hand overtop of George's placed on his cheek, stare burning brighter than the stars above them.

Dream could reach forward and kiss him. He could take George's face in his hands and slowly bring their faces together, could savor every movement and run his finger over his bottom lip that George pouts with when he doesn't get his way.

What Dream wants is right in front of him. All he needs to do is reach out, run a calloused hand against George's soft cheek, and maybe, *maybe*, he could finally show George how much he means to Dream. How much he always has.

Me, George had said his first night here, *and you*.

If he dared, he could have George be his, and he could be George's — isn't that all he wanted all along?

It hits Dream all at once. The proximity and the circumstance, his feelings in contrast to George's painful lack thereof. Thoughts creep into him, and they threaten to kick in his fight or flight. Guilt washes over him, a tsunami crashing upon the shore, and Dream feels like he's drowning.

He's drowning and George can't be the one to pull him out this time because Dream can't tell him about this.

George can't know the full extent of his impact on Dream, he can't know of nights spent lying awake, an empty space in him only one person could fill. He can't know of sleep-deprived mornings that Dream spent slumped over the kitchen counter, mind torturing him with images of George cooking them both breakfast, looking sleepy and hair disheveled. George can never know how much Dream hates himself for thinking these thoughts. For tainting their friendship into something it will never be.

This is my fault. I created something that doesn't exist. We're here, like this, because of me.

He gently removes George's hand from his cheek, and a hint of confusion stares back at him.

Dream's heart drops from the sight. He could never stand being the one who makes George look like that, always dropped everything and rushed to console him whenever he did.

He doesn't this time.

"We should go back in," Dream mutters instead, breaking their gaze and moving to climb back down.

They're back in his room less than a minute later, George wordlessly following after him. The unresolved air between them is too much for Dream to face, and he focuses his eyes on the fascinating carpet of his bedroom in the hopes that George will get the message.

When he looks up, George stands in his doorway and looks back at him. Yet again, Dream can't read the look on his face. Traces of confusion and dusks of melancholy illustrated on his features, he stands almost as if he's waiting for something to happen.

It's all far too much for Dream to process at this moment, and he knows it's just the nighttime seeping into his brain, and things feel just a bit fuzzier. Guilt and inner turmoil rack his brain and it coincides with a torturous sense of self-hatred. Why does he always have to make everything so *complicated*?

Dream can't give George an answer. He can't erase the downbeat cast of his eyes, the slump in his shoulders or the furrow in his brow. He can't explain what's *wrong*. This time, it's Dream holding all the answers behind a wall built high—kept safe and locked away, for his eyes only. How could he risk exposing the deepest part of his heart when he knows that it will only lead to everything around him crashing down, engulfed in flames with a desire to burn?

He turns away from George to shut the window and hears his footsteps trail down the stairs.

-

Dream is going in circles. Never has been good at being *still*.

He didn't sleep the night before, couldn't force his body to, now that he has such a painfully more vivid image of what he cannot have. He snuck back onto the roof at 4 A.M with quiet movements once he gave up on the off chance of sleep. He stayed there until just before sunrise, leaving only to avoid the inevitability of his thoughts turning to George with the beginning hues of the day.

As if they weren't focused on him already.

It's much harder to avoid someone who's sleeping a few walls away from you rather than an entire ocean, Dream thinks, as he orders breakfast delivery rather than walking to his own kitchen in fear of seeing George.

Well, maybe fear is a strong word. Slight worry, perhaps, or a tinge of unease.

He just doesn't know what to *think*, so he's trying unsuccessfully to not think at all.

Here Dream is, at a wonderful peace with his feelings for George, with keeping them to himself and continuing his normality of a best friend across the world.

Then, George is knocking on his car door and closing his cabinets too loud at 3 A.M and stealing his apple juice. He's ordering pizza with him, sitting by his side under the sunset's gaze, and they weave in and around each other seamlessly.

It's just as Dream imagined it to be, *dreamt it*, only in the depths of his imagination and never lacking the veil of far-fetchedness.

Your words are so lovely, George had said, *Why don't you share them enough?*

If only he knew. Or maybe he does.

Dream's full of love and he's been that way his whole life. It seeps through every crack in his body. His care oozes out of him, ever-flowing in abundance and a need to share it. He gives his sisters fresh bouquets on Valentine's Day when he knows nobody else will think to, he sends paragraphs of appreciation to his friends on more occasions than one day in late November.

He wonders if George knows how he consumes him.

They're for you, Dream had told him, in a moment of not-quite transparency.

You are my every thought, he should've said instead, *or at least bits of you linger in each one. I care about everyone, but I care about you differently. My words are written by the curve of your smile, spoken by your low-rounded vowels, and sung of the sparkle in your eye.*

Maybe then he'd be transparent.

"Is it better to speak or to die?" somebody asked once. *Speak*, they were told, but they didn't.

Dream wonders if it was the right decision.

-

There's a knock on his door in the space between early morning and bright afternoon.

"Dream?" George calls. He doesn't wait for a response before walking in, and Dream can't blame him.

"Hi," he mumbles upon George's entrance, feeling slightly exposed in his positioning, sheets half heartedly sprawled over his legs while he sits up with a bagel clutched in one hand and his phone in the other. A delivery bag sits loudly on top of his pillow, a pronounced statement of his desperate avoidance fully within George's line of sight.

Never one to waste any time with mindless small talk, "Take me on a picnic."

Dream blinks owlshly at him.

"I saw a field, or maybe a park? Field? Some grassy place with flowers on the drive here. We're going there. Should I bring apple or orange juice?"

Dream's mouth hangs agape, mind scrambling to decipher George's whirlwind of unintelligible sentences that all blend together in his muddled mind.

George looks him up and down, and seems to either not register or completely ignore the capricious emotional disaster that is currently Dream. He's doubtful that George has not picked up on Dream's heavy reluctance to go near him all day, but he's incredibly thankful that he doesn't mention it.

"Is thirty or so minutes fine?" George inquires instead.

"Um," Dream courageously manages, "yeah? That's-uh. That's fine."

George tilts his head at him expectantly.

"Apple juice," he answers slowly, feeling a slight sense of ease with the smile tugging at his lips. "Why would you even ask that?"

"I didn't know if you really liked orange juice, or something. I don't know."

A grin spreads across his face, the first one that day. "I might have to start, y'know since all my apple juice has been filthily robbed."

George flips him off.

"Be ready in thirty minutes," he orders as he marches out the door, adding on a resounding, "And I'm robbing your entire kitchen!"

He just sighs as he hears George thunder down the stairs. Dream is incapable of denying him anything, and they both know it.

Standing to open his blinds, Dream pulls a sweater over his t-shirt and lets the sun in. Unease and worry are melted away as he shifts mindsets to rack his brain for the best foods to bring to a picnic. *Muffins*, he wonders, *or maybe sandwiches?* A smile, of such heavy-laced affection that it ceases his brainstorming, spreads across his face when he realizes George is most definitely purging his whole kitchen right now.

Thirty-three minutes later, Dream is reversing out of the driveway while George clutches an enormous bag of food for dear life in the front seat.

"This is going to crush me," he complains, barely a minute in.

"You're the one who packed it!"

"So?"

"God, you're impossible," Dream shakes his head with fondness. "Can you tell me where I'm even going?"

"Just go like you're going to the airport. And there's a field. With flowers."

Dream glances over at him. "Are you having Minecraft hallucinations?"

"No, I'm not," George says with defensive certainty. "It shouldn't be that far from the house. Five minutes tops."

"You were asleep for half the ride!" Dream accuses. "How would you even—I really should have thought this through more."

He looks back over when George remains silent, and notices a visible pink on his cheeks as he stares straight ahead at the road. Before he can even think to ask anything, however, George is pointing ahead and his eyes are springing to life with excitement.

Sure enough, to the right of them is a wide open field, grass lively and dotted with scads of purple flowers that appear to have strawberries at their center. It's tucked away behind a handful of willow trees, concealed just enough to where Dream doesn't feel like a *complete* idiot for not noticing the space before.

"That's it! That's it, that's it, that's it!" George exclaims giddily as Dream pulls the car into park.

He doesn't even let George attempt to open his own door, fully aware their bag of food will end up

emptied into the grass.

George hands him the bag with a grateful smile and a slight blush still evident on his face. He follows after Dream to grab the blanket from the backseat. Naturally, Dream, who has never before been on a picnic, owned one of the stereotypical red and white patterned ones. When they found it in the depths of his cabinets, George laughed at him.

They wordlessly agree on a spot right by a willow tree, their blanket shared by the shade and the sunlight snatching through the branch openings.

The light flits over George's eyes as he moves to splay their food along the blanket, and Dream can't look away. He wonders, distantly, if anyone who's ever existed has come close to being as perfect as George. Maybe *perfect* is even too mundane. George glimmers in every sense of ethereal.

"Apple juice?" George offers, snapping Dream into reality.

"Course," he answers easily, grabbing a glass and letting George fill it to the brim.

From warm biscuits with butter to an assortment of fresh fruits, they talk about anything under the sun as they eat. They teeter on the edge of the surface, with conspiracy theories and boisterous laughter and eyes that linger too long, but they never breach it. Dream doesn't know whether or not he's thankful for it.

The day is beautiful, just sunlit enough to warm their faces and not regret wearing jeans. There's nobody on earth Dream would rather spend it with.

"You never asked me why I came here," George says, breaking their contented silence.

Dream looks at him. "It never crossed my mind," he tells him honestly.

He recognizes the look on George's face. It's the one where he wants to say something, or rather he wants Dream to hear it, but he doesn't quite know where to begin.

Eyebrows scrunched together, Dream knows to just let him unwind like a spin-up jewelry box. He ignores the slight churn in his stomach because, really, what could George want to say that'll trip him up any more than last night?

Then George is looking right at him, and everything he's tried to hold in, held together by thin seams, falls apart again.

"What," George says, a desperate confusion lacing his voice, "is holding you back so much?"

"George—"

"Don't *George* me like that. I hate it when you do that. So fucking agonizing," he continues with determination, clearly hitting his stride. "I flew across the *world*, Dream, with no fucking warning. I call you from a payphone, and I burst into your life, and you just *let me*. As if it's nothing. As if I'd do that to anyone-fucking-else. But at every turn, you hold back. You think I don't notice? I *do*. I always do. I know you better than anyone. Don't sit here and lie to my fucking face by saying nothing's going on. I'll see right through it."

Dream's mind reels to keep up with his train of thought. "What—what are you talking about?"

"Why didn't you kiss me on the roof last night?"

All of Dream's thoughts that had been firing mercilessly in his skull since George barrelled in his room this morning careen into utter stillness.

George's eyes bore into him, set with steely determination. They're as raw and as open as he's ever seen them, and Dream's reserve crumbles at last.

"George," he says, choked. "I—*everything* is holding me back. How could I kiss you when you drive me 'round the fucking *bend* stupid, but to you it's probably nothing? How could I possibly even *try* to tell you what I'm feeling when it's — it's the most important thing I've ever fucking felt, and I don't even know what you want for *dinner*—"

George reaches out and gently grabs Dream's cheek, the feeling cutting off any impending words. "Shut up," he tells him firmly. "You are so fucking stupid."

"Wha— " Dream stutters, hand unwittingly moving to rest atop his.

George intertwines their fingers. His skin is smooth where Dream's is roughened and cracked, and he grasps tight. "You and me," George says, eyes alight with gentle understanding. "We *fit*. Don't you see?"

But you and George are special, he remembers Sapnap saying. *Drawn to each other like magnets.*

Illuminated by the snatches of sunlight, Dream finally reaches.

He pulls their faces together, desperate from so much *wait* , and their lips crash together. They slot together with a fervency only two who've wasted too much time could fathom. From head to toe Dream feels *warm* , and his touch conveys more than he could ever say. His thumbs hang on George's jaw, fingers stretching to hold his neck with frantic craving.

Dream pulls away, but he holds George's face close. "I thought you didn't want me," he confesses, trying to blink away the tears collecting the corners of his eyes.

"You're everything I could ever want," George tells him. "I couldn't have been more obvious if I *tried* , Dream, are you serious? You're *everything* ."

He smiles. "If I'm everything, what possibly could you be?" He ponders for a moment. "If I'm everything," Dream begins, slowly, "then you're the stars. And the moon, and both the warm colors of the sunset and the light of sunrise, but yet you shine brighter than the sun."

George kisses him.

Sometime later, when the afternoon is beginning to dim and their lips are chapped from confessions and endless stolen kisses, they pack up their remaining food and drive back home.

George holds onto his hand the entire drive, and Dream thinks he'll never fully understand why the universe has been so good to him.

-

They're watching Howl's Moving Castle, cozied on Dream's couch and in each other's space when it occurs to Dream that he should probably call Sapnap.

George is curled into his side, arm draped across his waist and head laid on his chest. Dream presses a kiss to his hair. He looks more at peace than he's ever seen him. Thankfully, George is one of the deepest sleepers Dream knows, so he opens his phone, arm absentmindedly stroking

George's side, and calls Sapnap with no fear of waking him.

He answers on the first ring. "What the *fuck*, dude."

Dream winces. "I have a lot to tell you."

"It's been, like, a week!" Sapnap complains. Dream hears him take a few deep breaths before continuing. "Okay," he says, evidently calmer. "Tell me everything."

Dream does.

He starts with the night on his roof, just him and the sunset, when he came to peace with his feelings. Then continuing to how George showed up unannounced, and he thinks Sapnap drops his phone when he tells him how his peaceful breakfast turned into an airport pickup. He tells him of his utmost inner turmoil upon George's arrival, the almost-kiss on the roof and his never-ending anxiety, and how none of it mattered when George looked him in his eyes and said, *We fit, don't you see?*

He has to pull the phone away from his ear to somewhat silence Sapnap's excited squeals. " *Dream*," he says, ecstatic. "I'm so fucking happy for you. George is a fucking lunatic for just *showing up* , but I'm so happy you finally figured it out. My stupid best friends," Sapnap sighs, "I love you both so much."

Dream's heart threatens to burst with affection for his best friend. "I love you too, Sap. Thank you for everything. I'm sorry I've been a bad friend for disappearing. There's no way I would've figured it all out without you."

He can hear Sapnap's smile. "You would've. And I forgive you, but thank you for apologizing. Can I yell at George now, please?"

"He's asleep. When he wakes up you'll be the first to know."

"I'll hold you to it. Talk to you later, Dream. Love you."

"Love you too, Sap."

He hears the flat dial tone, and lowers the phone from his ear. He places it back on the table, shaking his head with fondness for his best friend.

Leaning his head atop of George's, Dream closes his eyes and eases into a relaxed rest.

He feels whole.

Some time passes, and Dream stirs from the lack of the previous warmth pressed to his side. He frowns when he doesn't see George upon opening his eyes. He sits up to scour his surroundings, spotting him behind the kitchen counter.

"What the hell are you doing?"

George whips around to face him, a pan in one hand and a full carton of eggs in another.

"Um — cooking?" he answers, an abashed smile extending on his sleep-tinted features. Dream thinks he looks beautiful, and he relishes in the fact that he can tell him so, and is met with flushed cheeks that George attempts to hide by turning back away from him.

Dream gets up from his wondrous resting place that, with a lack of George, is now just *cold* , and

he wanders over to see what on earth he's doing.

He finds George in a battle with the stove when he comes up behind him. He's pressing buttons and turning knobs at random, seemingly in an attempt to boil the bare egg that rests in the pan atop the unlit stove flame.

"George," he starts cautiously, "what are you trying to do?"

He sighs dramatically. "I was trying to make you some food, but I can't cook all that great."

Dream, the wonderful person he is, stifles his laugh. "I can see that," he observes, wrapping his arms around George's waist and plopping his face on his shoulder. "Would you like some help?"

George turns around so he's facing Dream, and rests his hands on his waist. "Can we just order something?"

Dream leans forward and presses a kiss to his forehead, and George hums in delight. He really can't believe this is his reality right now. "Of course we can," he answers easily. "Want anything specific?"

"Pancakes," he answers instantly.

"Oh my god," Dream whines. "That sounds so amazing right now. Chocolate chips?"

"Of course. Who do you think I am?"

"A heathen," he immediately replies. "Worst person I know."

George tilts his head at him.

Dream leans close, hands pressed against the counter and forehead barely touching George's. "I'm a liar," he whispers, and kisses him.

Immediately, George arms wrap behind his neck, and he feels him smile. In his post-rest haze and with the feeling of George's skin against his, Dream knows he's never going to fall for anyone else.

Dream pulls away, "Sapnap wants to yell at you," he tells him, with the utmost grace of someone who's just been kissed.

"He can wait," George replies, and pulls him back in.

-

They watched the sunset together, again, a little different this time, and now they're squeezed side-by-side in a bright red booth at one of Dream's favorite dinner places.

Dream halfheartedly glances over their shared menu, already sure of his order after so many meals spent here that the staff know his name and some of his deepest dark secrets. He looks through it anyways, for George's order, who is begrudgingly holding Dream's phone to his ear and looking as though he'd rather be doing anything else.

Sapnap is, as promised, yelling at him.

"—and you just *showed up*?" Dream overhears him shriek. "In America? Without *telling me*? You are—you're the worst person on earth. Like, genuinely. You show up in Florida, which—what the fuck? And—and you tell *nobody*, not even—not even *me*, of all people. I'm gonna catch a flight

there so I can yell at you for real. I don't give a fuck if you guys worked all your in-love shit, I'm on the *next flight out* —"

Dream gently lifts the phone from George's hand once Sapnap's betrayed screeching reaches a level of deafening that makes George wince. He lets Sapnap yell into the void for a few moments, until he's seemingly calmed down, and raises the phone to his own ear.

"Hey, Sap. Feel better?" he prods gently.

"No. I hate George," Sapnap declares, but his tone is light. "I'm gonna get him cancelled on twitter, just give me a second."

"Please don't," Dream replies, mild.

George looks at him, eyes asking *should I be worried?*

Dream just smiles dumbly, his heart glowing just at the mere sight of him, and shakes his head in assurance. George matches his grin and turns back to scouring the menu.

"Fine," Sapnap relents over the phone.

"You're my favorite," he tells him, and George kicks him under the table. Dream moves his hand to rest on his inner thigh, and taps it *one, two, three* .

"Doubtful, but I'll take it!" Sapnap laughs. "I'm gonna go—I'll leave you two to have dinner, or whatever. Love you both."

"Love you too. So does George, he's just full of shit." Dream expects another kick at that, but George is instead vehemently focused on deciding between the infinite food choices.

"Like I didn't know that. Later!"

"Bye, Sap."

Dream lowers his phone and looks back over to George's menu investigation. "Anything look good?" he asks, thumb gently stroking his thigh.

"What the actual fuck is a *Floridian Smokehouse Surprise*?"

"It's actually pretty good!" Dream laughs at his utter bewilderment. "You should try it, it's a burger that's got—" he glances down at the menu, "—bacon, lots of cheddar, onions, pickles, tomatoes..." he trails off once he notices George staring at him as if he's grown two heads.

"No," George states, as if it's the most obvious thing in the world. "Who on *earth* needs that much on a burger?"

"You, apparently."

"Fuck off. I'm gonna get cheese fries."

Eventually the waitress arrives at their table, greeting the both of them with a bright smile, and George orders his dumb cheese fries.

Dream gets a Floridian Smokehouse Surprise.

When their food arrives, the waitress hands them their respective meals and her narrowed gaze hops

between the two of them. Dream figures it's probably because they're squeezed together on the *same side* of the booth, which is, admittedly unpractical, but—

"You two make a lovely couple," she says instead, earnest, and walks off to the next table.

Dream chokes on his lemonade. George just grins down at his lap.

A few moments of straining silence pass before Dream speaks up, "Is that it?"

"Is what?"

"A lovely couple," he reaffirms. "Is that what we are?"

George's eyes are challenging, "Is that what you want to be?"

"Yes," he decides, and his fingers instinctively move to interlock with Georges. "That's what I want, 'course it is, George."

"Well then, I guess we can agree on something," George says simply, and then he reaches for his cheese fries.

They eat in a content, relative silence, a mutual understanding between them that makes Dream's heart simmer and dance and glow beneath his skin. Giddiness courses through his veins with an underlying streak of incredulity Dream wishes he could rid himself of. Instead, he focuses on the food before him.

His incredible Smokehouse Surprise is remarkably larger than George's mediocre plate of fries. Happily eating his burger and enjoying the insane mixture of toppings as well as the incredible lemonade he ordered, Dream deliberately ignores the longing looks George keeps shooting at his food.

"Dream," he whines, finally coming to the realization that *cheese fries* are not a full meal. "Can I have a bite?"

His capability to refuse George anything dissipated long ago, barely ever existing at all, but Dream really likes pretending that it didn't.

"Maybe," Dream hums. "If you say please."

George sighs dramatically. "Please?" he echos with resent. Dream never stood a chance.

He watches as George finishes the remainder of his burger *and* his lemonade, and Dream just lets him. Within minutes after he's done, he's hurrying Dream with the excitement of a restless child on Christmas morning to sign the check and let them leave.

"Dream, Dream, look at the sky!" he exclaims, pointing eagerly towards the window by the exit. "There's *stars!* Come on, hurry up! You're moving that pen slowly on purpose, I swear—"

Finally, Dream hands the check to the concerned-looking waitress, and they stumble outside hand-in-hand, intoxicated on nothing but the exhilaratingly cool air and the touch of each other's skin.

"Where do we go?" Dream asks him, forever letting George pave the way.

"*This* way," George promptly declares, and pulls them towards an empty parking garage.

A prompt *No Trespassing After Dark!* sign sits threateningly at the entrance. They take one look at

it, giggle like little kids, and Dream tugs George forward.

On the mission to get to the roof and see the stars, they run up level after level of the parking deck, their laughter and yells echoing off the walls serving only to set them off further.

Around the fifth level up they slow to a walk, when the top is in sight and their breaths have long escaped them. George's skin is illuminated by the pale moonlight trickling in the walls' crevices, and his fingers are locked with Dream's own.

Years ago, when they met, he thought him and George fell into each other easily. That it couldn't possibly get better than what they had then—hour long calls and enough laughter to anger George's parents at any hour of the day. Consistently checking in on one another; never prying, but always *there*.

Strolling up a parking deck in the middle of the night, hand in hand and embarrassingly smitten, being wrong has never brought Dream so much euphoria.

"Can't believe I get to have you," he confesses, and his voice laced with the sheer disbelief that flows through him, that has been flowing in persistence since the day at the picnic. The relief of raw honesty washes over him, but nervousness still tinges his heart at his words.

George catches it, because he always does. He stops in his tracks and meets his eyes, "Dream," he starts, slow and sure. "Do you know why I came here?"

"Why?" he asks, helpless to do anything but listen, listen, listen.

"Because when you disappeared, I had no idea what to think. It's exactly what I said when I called you that day—you had never done that before. Radio silence, for *three days*, for you and me was something I was very not used to. And it scared me more than I'd have liked. And I think, then, it all clicked—" he reaches to tuck a stray curl behind Dream's ear, "—something that had been there all along, finally made sense when you weren't there. It was like finding out I had this parasite, or this gap in me, and it was shaped just like you."

George's words rush over him, like sleep to the freezing, and he's stunned to stillness.

"You came into my life out of nowhere. And my walls were built up so high, but you knocked and knocked and knocked with patience, for years until I finally let you in.

"Dream," George whispers fervently, "You are so easy to love."

He blinks back the shine of his eyes and reaches to hold George close. Arms wrapped tight around his waist and face pressed to the curve in his neck, Dream whispers, "I love you, too."

Eventually they separate, but their interlocked hands and lovestruck eyes remain.

When they reach the roof Dream doesn't think the stars are *that* spectacular, but George is in awe. Face tilted to the sky in amazement, it's as if there's no possible way he can hold all his joy at once, as though glee spills out of his every pore, and it fills Dream up, too.

As if coming to some sort of realization, George tears his blissful daze from the sky and fixes it on Dream.

"Where have you been, all this time?" he asks him, brown eyes dancing with the light of the moon and a smile spreading across his face.

Dream thinks of nights spent alone, of heavy hearts and broken souls, and previous emptiness. He thinks of all the times he was stuck in his own head wondering, hoping, *waiting* to feel whole. He thinks of all the sunsets spent yearning for a boy who couldn't truly see them anyways, an ocean away from him, who finally made him feel like enough.

His hand moves to George's cheek, and he's never been surer of anything in his life.

"On my way to you."

End Notes

hello again! thank you so much for reading, i hope you enjoyed !!

to everyone i made read over this - mikey, uli, dani, chauncey, evan - i love you all, and thank you for your wonderful feedback and kind words. you all are some of my favorite humans out there.

this was the very first thing i ever started writing, and it means a lot to me. without maia (and mikey i guess) i simply never would have continued it, so as always, all my love goes out to you two.

if you leave comments, i will give you a hug (with consent)

<https://discord.gg/WatfsYD7wy> join the safe space :D

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!